

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MONROV 01430 261703Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9167

S E C R E T MONROVIA 1430

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AO, LI, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET-CUBAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA: PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S
VIEWS

REF: (A) MONROVIA 1423, (B) MONROVIA 1293

1. I CALLED ON PRESIDENT TOLBERT AT 10:30 A.M. FEBRUARY 26
AT HIS REQUEST. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER OKAI AND MINISTER FOR PRES-
IDENTIAL AFFAIRS TOWNSEND WERE THE ONLY OTHER PERSONS PRESENT.

2. TOLBERT OPENED BY REITERATING AND CONFIRMING,
RATHER LENGTHILY, THE VIEWS AND SCENARIO SET FORTH BY FOREIGN
MINISTER DENNIS IN OUR FEBRUARY 20 DISCUSSIONS (SEE REF B).
TOLBERT THEN TOLD ME HE HAD WRITTEN A LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD
SETTING FORTH THESE VIEWS, BUT HAD NOT MADE UP HIS MIND WHETHER
TO GIVE ME THE LETTER FOR ONWARD TRANSMISSION OR TO FORWARD IT
THROUGH HIS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. KNOWING THAT AMBASSADOR
PEAL IS STILL IN LIBERIA AND PRESENTLY UP-
COUNTRY, I OFFERED TO TRANSMIT THE LETTER THROUGH USG FACILITIES
ASSURING TOLBERT IT WOULD BE DONE EXPEDITIOUSLY. HE THEN SAID HE
WOULD APPRECIATE MY TRANSMITTING IT.

3. I THINK TOLBERT'S LETTER SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. NEVERTHELESS, I
WOULD NOTE THAT IN HIS ORAL PRESENTATION TO ME, HE STRESSED THE
FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. HE WAS MOTIVATED TO UNDERTAKE THE INITIATIVE BY HIS
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SECRET

PAGE 02 MONROV 01430 261703Z

DESIRE TO BRING PEACE TO AFRICA AND BECAUSE OF HIS RECOGNITION

OF THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION, TO WIT: MPLA HAS WON IN ANGOLA, SOVIET AND CUBAN FORCES WILL NOT BE WITHDRAWN IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR EXPANSION OF THE CONFLICT INTO NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE, WITH THE ATTENDANT CONSIDERABLE BLOODSHED, IS REAL AND IMMINENT.

B. AFRICA IS DETERMINED TO RID THE CONTINENT OF COLONIALISM AND APARTHEID NO MATTER WHAT THE COST AND WILL USE WHATEVER HELP IT CAN GET, IDEOLOGY NOTWITHSTANDING, TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PURPOSE.

C. THOSE NATIONS HAVING SPECIAL INFLUENCE WITH THE VORSTER AND SMITH GOVERNMENTS CAN POSSIBLY BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE. BUT THEY MUST ACT SOON AND DECISIVELY. HE SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS CRITICAL FOR ACTION TO BE TAKEN NOW BEFORE THE VIOLENCE SPILLED OVER INTO NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE. HE SAID QTE IT IS BETTER TO TAKE ACTION BEFORE SOMETHING HAPPENS THAN AFTER IT HAPPENS UNQTE.

4. WHEN I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT HE WOULD COMMUNICATE HIS VIEWS TO OTHER WORLD LEADERS HE SAID HE WAS DOING SO. HE SAID HE IS CALLING IN THE AMBASSADORS OF THE UK, FRG, FRANCE, NETHERLANDS AND ITALY, AND WILL DELIVER SIMILAR MESSAGES. SAID HE WANTED TO SHARE HIS VIEWS WITH THE USG FIRST QTE OUR FIRST AND BEST FRIENDS UNQTE.

5. COMMENT: TOLBERT LEFT ME WITH THREE IMPRESSIONS: (A) HE SINCERELY BELIEVES THAT THE SOVIETS-CUBANS WILL IMMINENTLY CARRY THE CONFLICT TO NAMIBIA AND ZIMBABWE AND THAT BLACK AFRICA WILL NOT ONLY PERMIT THEM TO DO SO BUT WILL CHEER THEM ON UNLESS NAMIBIA IS FREED IMMEDIATELY AND MAJORITY RULE IS AGREED UPON IN ZIMBABWE; (B) HE BELIEVES THAT ONLY THE USG AND THE OTHER GOVERNMENTS NAMED ABOVE HAVE THE PERSUASIVE FORCE TO TURN VORSTER AND SMITH AROUND. IF THESE GOVERNMENTS FAIL TO DO SO, IMMEDIATE AND EXTENSIVE ADDITIONAL VIOLENCE CAN BE EXPECTED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA; AND (C) HE WOULD HOPE THAT USG WOULD TAKE IMMEDIATE AND DECISIVE LEAD IN BRINGING ABOUT DESIRED PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS. IMPLICIT THROUGHOUT HIS REMARKS WAS THE PROPOSITION THAT THIS MAY BE THE LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR THE USG TO MAINTAIN AND EXERCISE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN BLACK AFRICA. END COMMENT.
BEAN

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